

Lesson 1

I. CHRIST ASCENDS AND THE APOSTLES WAIT (Acts 1)

A. Luke's Address and Introduction (1:1-3)

Luke had previously written to Theophilus concerning "*all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.*" Acts 1:1 . Luke's gospel ended with Christ ascending and the apostles returning to Jerusalem from the site of the ascension Luke 24:50-52 . Luke reminds Theophilus in the opening of the book of Acts that Christ's ascension was the last thing he had written about in the Gospel of Luke. From this common point Luke now proceeds to give a fuller account of the activities of Christ and His apostles immediately before and after Christ's ascension.

Next Luke begins to make summary statements, the first of these statements begin with verse 3. He summed up the events of 40 days by saying the Lord showed himself to the apostles after his death and spoke to them about the kingdom. This is an interesting statement for it is here we learn that out of the 50 days between Crucifixion and the day of Pentecost Christ was on the earth for 40 of those days. Forty is a significant number in the Bible. It rained on the earth 40 days and 40 nights during the flood (Genesis 7:12). Moses was up on Mount Sinai 40 days and 40 nights before receiving the 10 commandments Deuteronomy 9:9 . Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights before being tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:2).

It is also interesting that Jesus stayed on earth long enough to make numerous appearances to his apostles and others. (1 Cor. 15:5-8). Because of this the apostles never wavered in their faith in Christ the risen Savior and bore witness to him whom they had seen many times in his resurrected body.

B. The Lord's Promise of the Holy Spirit to The Apostles (1:4-8)

Luke's continuation of history after his gospel account begins with verse 4. He begins filling in the details of the conversation between the Lord and His apostles on the day of his ascension. First he told them, not to go back to their homelands, but to remain in Jerusalem. Then he told them why. They were to "*wait for the Promise of the Father.*"

Jesus left neither the apostles or those reading this account today in doubt as to the promise he was referring. He was referring to the promise mentioned by John in Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16.

Even though John had announced that Jesus would administer Holy Spirit baptism, the Lord had promised in his message to the 11 on the night in which he was betrayed that he would send the Holy Spirit upon them. Jesus made reference to the Holy Spirit by various names; among them were "Comforter", the "Spirit of Truth" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:13).

Jesus reference to receiving "power" shows when the kingdom would be and was established. Jesus had made mention in Mark 9:1 1 "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." Notice he says they will see the kingdom come with power. Both the power and the baptism of the Holy Spirit were to be received while the apostles waited in Jerusalem after the Lord had ascended. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5)

C. The Lord's Ascension (1:9-11)

Mark (Mark 16:19) and Luke (Luke 24:51) had given an account of the ascension. The fullest account of the ascension is found in Acts. It was in the presence of the eleven. No one else is mentioned in Acts 1 as being with the Lord before his ascension. Jesus had repeatedly told the 11 he would soon return to the Father (John 14:2-6, 18-19, 28-29; 16:5-10, 16-19, 28), but he had not told them the manner

of this return.

Although they had seen Jesus do many amazing miracles they had never seen what they were about to see. They were probably awe struck and amazed when before their eyes Jesus began rising in the air! Luke tells us in Luke 24:51 he was in the act of blessing the 11 and raised his hands as he began to ascend. He rose until he disappeared into a cloud. They truly must have been in a fixed gaze as their eyes were fixed upon the cloud that had received the Lord out of their sight.

As they watched two men in white apparel appeared beside them and talked with them. It is obvious that these were not ordinary men, but heavenly messengers, angels in the form of men. Their sudden appearance, their white clothing and their message to the apostles so indicate. Other places where similar descriptions of angels as “men” are found in Luke 24:4; Matthew 28:5 and John 20:12. The idea was why stand looking when there was work that the Savior had left them to do. It was indeed time to get at it. These messengers gave reassurance to them by stating “*This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heave, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.*” Jesus departed visibly, so his return will be visibly (Revelation 1:7). As he disappeared into the cloud, so he will reappear with the clouds (Rev. 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Since his ascension was accompanied by angels, his return will be with angels (Matthew 25:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). Since Jesus departed in body form, his return will be that way.

The phrase “into heaven” is used 3 times and is likely a reference to the immediate or “first heaven” the atmosphere in each case is that area Jesus disappeared. Later, in the Sermon on Pentecost we will see that the apostles understood that Christ was not merely perched on a cloud, but had ascended to the dwelling place of God where God placed him on the throne and made him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:34-36).

It is important to note a number of things that couldn't happen unless the Lord ascended. Among them are: 1. He could not send the Holy Spirit to the apostles (John 16:7) 2. He could not be on the throne of his kingdom until he returned to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 2:32-36; 5:31; 1 Timothy 3:16). 3. He could not present his atoning blood for the sins of men without returning to the Father (Hebrews 9:12-14, 24-26). 4. Jesus could not become our Mediator and we could not come boldly to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1-2).

D. Waiting Time In Jerusalem (1:12-14)

At the time of the Lord's ascension the apostles were on the mountain called Olivet. Olivet was located just east of Jerusalem across the Kidron valley a “sabbath days journey”. When the angels asked them why they were gazing upward into heaven their attention was then drawn to the work they must do. The upper room to which they returned in Jerusalem is thought by many to be the same room that Jesus met the 12 for the last Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:12-13).

Luke in verse 13 gives a list of those in the upper room the Judas listed last is not the name of Iscariot, the traitor. He lists the 11 left along with various women who had faithfully served the Lord and the apostles in their work (Matthew 27:55-56; Luke 23:49, 55; John 19:25) and the brothers of Jesus who “continued with one accord in prayer.”

E. Matthias is Chosen to Replace Judas (1:15 - 26)

Of the events that took place in the 10 day period between the ascension of Jesus and Pentecost the most prominent was the selection of a replacement for Judas Iscariot. Peter stands up in the middle of the disciples, who Luke says numbered about a hundred and twenty and first appeals scriptural ground for Judas' replacement by making reference to the Holy Spirit's speaking through David concerning Judas. Peter quotes from two Psalms (Psalm 69:25; 109:8) How he became a guide to those who arrested Jesus, was numbered with them that is being a disciple himself purchased a field with the 30 pieces of silver he received. This field was purchased by the Chief Priest when Judas threw the money back to them and they didn't know what to do with it. Then Judas committed suicide by hanging himself. David even spoke to the fact that another take his place. This statement declares the divine origin of

the message. Notice the order in the phrases “scripture fulfilled,’ Holy Spirit spake,” and “mouth of David.” Thus showing us the Holy Spirit is the ultimate source, The mouth of David was the medium employed and Scripture was the final result.

Peter next states the qualifications of the one who would be eligible to be the successor of Judas:
1 He must have been among the company of Jesus’ disciples from the time John began baptizing until the Ascension, also note: John 15:27. (2) he must be a witness of the resurrection of Christ. Observe McGarvey’s comment about this: *“There being no other instance in the New Testament of the selection of a successor to an apostle, this is our only scriptural guide upon the subject, and, therefore, it is unscriptural for any man to lay claim to the office who has not been a companion of Jesus, and a witness of his resurrection. The reason for confining the selection those who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning, is because such would be the most reliable witness to his identity after the resurrection. One less familiar with his person would, be less perfectly guarded against imposition. Peter, here, like Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 makes the whole value of apostolic testimony depend upon ability to prove the resurrection of Jesus.”* **Original Commentary on Acts by J. W. McGarvey page 22**

Two men among the company of people were put forth probably because they were the only two that met the qualifications. Notice that neither the apostles nor the 120 made the choice but prayer was offered to the Lord for Him to make the choice. It was appropriate for the Lord to choose Judas’ successor since he had chosen Judas. There is no precedent for a future line of continuous apostleship as the Mormons, Roman Catholics and others teach. It is important to note that when James was slain by Herod in Acts 12:1 2 no replacement was made.

Lots were now drawn to see who would be the successor. It is not stated in the text the exact procedure followed in the casting of lots. One possible way that some commentators write that it was probably two markers, each with one name upon it, were placed into a vessel which was shaken so hard that one flew out. The lot “fell upon” Matthias and it was never doubted by the 11 or the others assembled that he was God’s choice. No further mention is made to Matthias in the New Testament

Christ Ascends and the Apostles Wait Lesson 1

I. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS GIVING SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

1. _ The Book of Acts was written to _____
2. What did the “former accounts” cover? _____

3. The apostles were to wait for the promise in the city of _____
4. What is involved in the expression, “Baptized with the Holy Spirit?” _____

5. The gospel was to be preached first in _____
6. How can one establish the length of a “sabbath day’s journey?” _____

7. What is said that affirms Christ's second coming? _____

8. In verse 18, explain what is meant by purchasing a field and his entrails gushing out?

9. How many days elapsed from the resurrection of Jesus to the day of Pentecost? _____

10. Why did the Lord have to choose between the two men? _____

II. TRUE OR FALSE

_____1. John was the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism.

_____2. While the apostles stood gazing, two men in white apparel appeared in the heavens.

_____3. Judas was not among the apostles in the upper room.

_____4. Matthias was selected to replace Judas before the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

_____5. Judas was so wicked that he never was counted a part of the 12 apostles.

III. RESEARCH

Locate other times in the Bible that Lots were cast? _____

IV. THOUGHT QUESTION

What was the purpose of the apostles receiving Holy Spirit baptism? Give scripture to show whether people today can receive Holy Spirit Baptism. _____
